

LGBTQ+ Legislative Democrats: Celebrate Pride Month, reflect on missed opportunities

Posted on Wednesday, Jun 1, 2022

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MADISON - Today, on the first day of Pride Month, Democratic members of the Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus celebrate Governor Evers raising, for the first time, the Progress Pride Flag over the Capitol and call out their Republican colleagues for their LGBTQ+ record this legislative session.

Democratic members of the LGBTQ+ Caucus released the following statement:

“We are grateful that Governor Evers has, for the first time, flown the Progress Pride Flag over the State Capitol. This year marks the fourth time in Wisconsin history a Pride Flag has flown above our state’s Capitol, and serves as a reminder to all that there are many in Wisconsin who work hard to ensure that our state remains welcoming and inclusive for the queer community. This has been an exceptionally difficult year for transgender, non-binary and LGBTQ+ individuals and their families. We want to acknowledge that difficulty while still lifting up Pride as a joyful time to remind those in the LGBTQ+ community that they are seen, that they matter, and that there are individuals fighting for them.

“As out LGBTQ+ legislators, we boldly fought back against attacks on LGBTQ+ youth and families this session and we were proud to work with our allies during Pride 2021 to introduce the Equality Agenda. In spite of bipartisan support for parts of this package, Republican leadership refused to schedule committee hearings or move the 2021 Equality Agenda bills forward. Nevertheless, we are committed to continuing to introduce and fight for bills to provide equal rights and protections from discrimination for all LGBTQ+ individuals.”

In 2021, Republicans introduced legislation which excluded trans girls and women from playing sports, legislation which prohibits gender-affirming care for trans youth, and legislation to allow lawsuits to be filed against school districts or school officials over the use of students' chosen names or pronouns. Because of advocacy from the LGBTQ+ community and allies, and the veto pen of Governor Tony Evers, these bills did not become law. In addition to discriminatory and harmful legislation, Wisconsin Republicans failed to advance any bills from the bipartisan Equality Agenda, a package of six bills that will ban conversion therapy, prohibit discrimination on the basis of a person's gender identity or gender expression, eliminate the gay and transgender "panic" defense, create a transgender equality task force, and update Wisconsin's statutes and constitution to recognize marriage equality. In February of this year, Republicans adjourned for the remainder of this session. The LGBTQ+ Caucus plans to reintroduce the Equality Agenda in 2023.

A one-pager is attached with more information about bills impacting the LGBTQ+ community this session, along with a photograph of the Progress Pride Flag.